

Scapegoat Theory and the Discursive Representations of Immigration

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ABSTRACT

Scapegoat theory suggests that difficult economic and political woes cause majority populations to lash out against a convenient out-group. The rhetorical suppositions of scapegoat theory presented by philosopher and linguistic scholar C. Allen Carter are combined with relevant psychological literature in order to define six scapegoating strategies: indirect hostility, irritability, negativism, resentment, suspicion, and verbal hostility. A total of 414 published news articles were analyzed to determine whether or not the scapegoating strategies are found within the form, style, or content of the arguments presented.

A methodological approach consisted of four linear activities: locating artifacts, identifying material, analyzing, and evaluating. Artifacts were collected using Lexis-Nexis Academic database for the years between 2009-2011, and evaluated upon their relation the socio-political issue of United States immigration as a broad topic or the migrant population itself. Qualitative results indicate major themes analyzed according to publication year. Results concluded that many of the strategies defined to be parameters of scapegoating are present within the artifacts. However, these trends are confined to a minority group and were not seen qualitatively significant.

INTRODUCTION

Immigration, as well as many other issues surrounding the Mexican-American border, has once again come to the forefront of public debate since the introduction of Arizona's restrictive immigration legislation SB 1070, and the later revision HB 2162 (Corlett, 2010). This renewed political interest has served to reinforce many of the classic rhetorical constructions surrounding the Latino and Mexican migrant population. As one reads through the news media that followed this rise in political interest one would find many articles and editorials with titles like, "Don't Treat Immigrants as Scapegoats" and "Scapegoating behind anti-immigration laws". The theoretical presumptions of scapegoating are never discussed in the articles, thus leaving a gap between the presumed scapegoating act and the theory or strategies that make up scapegoating behavior. This gap in logical reasoning raised the question of whether or not scapegoating themes can be found within modern immigration discourse. Through the investigation of the base of knowledge that is used to support these discursive formations, one is able to better understand the scope and implications of scapegoat theory within the modern rhetorical representations of immigration and the migrant body.

Scapegoat Theory

Scapegoat theory suggests that difficult economic and political woes

cause people to lash out against a convenient out-group (Esses, Jackson, & Armstrong, 1998; Stewart, Pitts, & Osborne, 2011; Zawadzki, 1948). This feeling of prejudice is only increased if the individual perceives that the out-group is cognitively linked to the source of discontent (Demo, 2005; Zawadzki, 1948). Viewing racial prejudice as an accumulation of emotional defense strategies enables one to understand the phenomena as a strategy that brings multiple forces together to define the characteristics and parameters of inter-group dynamics and racial identities (Dixon, Schell, Giles, & Drogos, 2008). Scapegoat theory is closely tied to the notion of conflict theory; hostility towards the out-group will arise when the in-group perceives a conflict with the minority population for scarce resources (Esses et al., 1998).

Following the writings of Kenneth Burke, C. Allen Carter outlines three elements of the scapegoat process: hierarchical insecurity, a fear of death, and ethical guilt. Hierarchical insecurity can be simply defined as the feelings of insecurity that come with being higher on the ladder of power than others. The definition of a fear of death is the fear and insecurity with realizing the inevitability of one's demise. Finally, ethical guilt can be defined as the feelings of guilt that are associated with not being able to follow all of the rules and moral guidelines of society at all times. While Carter makes very clear and compelling distinctions between the ways these three elements interact with each other, I would argue that two of the elements can be attributed to the genesis of one: a fear of death. It does not seem possible to have insecurity within those at the top of a hierarchical structure without having a fear of losing one's power, and an imminent fear of

death is associated with this loss of power. Thus, a fear of death leads to a sense of insecurity among those at the top of the hierarchical ladder. This feeling of insecurity leads the hierarchical elite to enact laws and provisions that limit the movement of those persons below them. No one is able to honestly follow every commandment that is set by the forces of society, thus leaving a sense of ethical guilt for falling short.

Since, for the purposes of this study, a general fear of death will be seen as the genesis for all scapegoating projections, the two commonly cited feelings that represent a fear of death, frustration and hostility, will be used to measure scapegoating projections (Zawadzki, 1948). Hostility and frustration that are embodied by the majority populous are projected upon a minority community in six different ways:

1. Indirect Hostility: This is a roundabout way of projecting aggression, usually by devious means. Common indirect tactics have been shown to include practical jokes and malicious gossip
2. Irritability: This is a readiness to project negative attitudes with the slightest bit of provocation. This includes the projection of rudeness and exasperation.
3. Negativism: Direct opposition that is most often projected upon authority. This is most commonly seen as a refusal to cooperate that may span from direct to in-direct noncompliance.
4. Resentment: This is known as any sort of projected jealousy or hatred toward others. These feelings of anger usually refer to either a real or fantasized mistreatment.
5. Suspicion: This sort of projection of hostility upon others usually varies

from a simple feeling of distrust to a more direct belief of others planning harm.

6. Verbal Hostility: Negative feelings that are expressed in either the style or the content of speech. The style of speech would include such vocalic strategies such as a control over the tonality of voice. The content of speech would include everything from direct threats of harm to simply being overcritical.

Racial Prejudice and Symbolic Action

Racism and other prejudicial perspectives, by nature, are violations of the hierarchical structures that aim to protect the fabric of civility and society (Asma, 1995; Kenneth Burke, 1966; Meneses, 2003; Musolff, 2007). While racism is perceived with its appropriate negativity by most of the American population, one out of eight Americans still describe themselves as racially biased (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2002). Furthermore, 80 percent of white Americans have racially biased feelings that they might not even recognize (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2002). The rebirth of these conscious and unconscious racially biased perceptions can be explained through the lens of social learning theory. This theory asserts that the individual's perceptions about a certain out-group directly correlate with the attitudes that are expressed by the individual's parents or social environment (Gerstenfeld, 2002). By organizing complex social information through perceiving many disparate members of the out-group as being all the same, many individuals will adopt a view of out-group homogeneity often with ethnocentric characteristics (Asma, 1995; Gerstenfeld, 2002).

At the heart of all discourses is the action that is used to condense and form

reality from them. This is called symbolic action, a process of selecting one reality while at the same time deselecting another (Burke, 1966). The set of knowledge that one uses throughout this process is called a "terministic screen" (Burke, 1951). These "screens" of knowledge serve as our justification or reasoning for selecting one reality over another. Any definition or terminology, no matter how much of a reflection of reality this terminology may be, is the selection of one's reality and the deselection of another (Burke, 1966). An expert and pioneer of discursive formations and symbolic action, Kenneth Burke discusses how the early Church forbade any persons to duel. Instead, the two challengers would merely go for a walk where the duel was to take place, arming himself in the case that he were to meet an armed enemy. By directing the intention of this "walk" enemies were able to have their duel without crossing the Church's sanction on the practice (Burke, 1966). The same sort of direction of racist intentions can be seen in modern immigrant discourse. While one of the dominant discursive formations selects and defines Latino and Mexican immigrants as criminals, the alternative reality that most of these migrants are peaceful and law abiding is not selected. This process of selection and de-selection allows one to direct racist intentions through discourse in order to narrow the "viewability" of the audience's reality, allowing one only to see the discursive structure of reality that is presented (Kenneth Burke, 1966; Hattery, Embrick, & E. Smith, 2008; Portes, 2009). This process of conditioning racist prejudice and discontent comes from a moralizing and meditative point of view (Hart, 1967).

Visual and discursive metaphors are often used to condense the complex

networks of information that surround issues of race and class (Arnold, 2007; Asma, 1995; Chavez, 2009; Corlett, 2010; Delgado, 2003; Musolff, 2007). Metaphors map from a conceptual “source domain” to a “target domain”, resulting in conceptual “blends” that shape perceptions of one’s worldviews, categorizing and interpreting life experiences; metaphor allows one to view source concepts as unproblematic presuppositions (Kenneth Burke, 1966). This conceptual blending is what is known as an inferential structure, the structure that is apparent in the continuum between the presuppositions in the source concepts, and the conclusions that are drawn at the target level (Musolff, 2007).

The history of one metaphor in particular highlights the way in which dominant discursive metaphors of Latino and Mexican migrants come to influence the dominant social and legal perspectives: the alien. The legal description was first introduced in the Immigration Act of 1924 (Hansen N., 2009). This restrictive immigration law used the term “alien” to describe the presumption that the national “body” was a sterile social and economic structure that needed to be guarded from the degenerate contaminations of foreign cultures, economies, and peoples (Goldberg & Solomos, 2002). Laws and discourse surrounding the process of defining an illegal immigrant are known to be problematic simply because illegal or undocumented immigrants look like other Americans (Chapkis, 2003). Thus, the boundaries between illegal and legal have much less to do with whether or not one is in fact a citizen, but rather have more to do with the perceived boundaries of race and class. The use of the “alien” metaphor gives one the ability to separate

the human from the metaphor, stripping the human of individuality and making the “alien” a dominate-able specter (Chavez, 2009).

The majority of metaphors that have to deal with Latino and Mexican immigrants focus on the use of the migrant body as a sort of “text” from which dominant discursive meanings surrounding the migrant population are drawn from and translated (Chavez, 2009). These discursive constructions of undocumented migrants usually embody one, if not all, of the following forms: an economic unit, criminal, parasite or pathogen, threat to American culture, and an alien (Chavez, 2009). These discourses frame a basic understanding of migration issues, coming together in a cluster of persistent images and rhetoric that ultimately signal to the general population the contextual position in which the problem should be framed, further condensing a sense of identification within the majority in-group (Delgado, 2003).

Racial Profiling

Racial profiling is known to be the singling out of an individual for interrogation or arrest because of their perceived race; the assumption is that the individual is not being selected because of the description of some specific suspect, but rather as part of some preconceived notion of the criminality of a certain ethnic group (Arnold, 2007). Racial profiling and human rights violations reinforce the assumption that immigration restrictions and rhetoric are inseparable from domestic race relations (Hattery et al., 2008). A systematical abuse of human rights has not been found in research focusing on the interactions between both federally trained and non-federally trained immigration enforcement officers (Meneses, 2003).

While there may be no direct evidence between the metaphorical discursive formations of restrictive immigration policies and systematic human rights violations, it has been shown that there is a direct link between these formations of immigration discourse and civil rights violations such as racial profiling (Arnold, 2007).

In an attempt to separate racial profiling from color profiling, one author suggests that color profiling is merely a *prima facie* indicator of one's race and therefore is free from the morally problematic characteristics of discerning one race from another (Corlett, 2010). The author goes on to further suggest that the "matter of degree" nature that is problematic within racial profiling is not an issue in the light of color profiling (Corlett, 2010). While the author does attempt to ground color profiling within the boundaries of acceptable social practices, one cannot deny that an individual's color is no more of an indicator of that person's legal status than their race (Arnold, 2007; Chapkis, 2003; Delgado, 2003; Musolff, 2007). Whether one decides to call it racial or color profiling the main point is that these arrests, stops, and interrogations are often not made on the basis of the individual's behavior or actions but merely on their perceived legal status that is conceptually based on their skin color. In the end, no matter how accurate an officer may be in even correctly identifying a Latino individual from a Japanese individual, the individual is still being subjected to the discursive formations that simplify such social constructions as race and class (Arnold, 2007; Asma, 1995; Chapkis, 2003). Under this light, it is impossible to separate racial profiling from color profiling, because to profile one based upon the

skin color is ultimately to profile them based upon the common skin characteristics of a particular racial group.

METHODS

A methodological approach consisted of four activities that follow a linear plain: locating artifacts, identifying material, analyzing the material, and defining the rhetorical situation. This open-ended methodological approach allowed for the development of theory through an iterative process of data and theoretical analysis, continually verifying the relationship between the data that is obtained from artifacts with the theoretical presumptions of scapegoat theory (Ott, 1998).

Locating Artifacts

As defined by Goetz and Lecompte (1984), an artifact is anything that may help illuminate research questions such as, but not limited to: legal records, written documents, memos, demographic information (Brock & Scott, 1989). For the purposes of this study a collection publishing's by major media outlets such as articles, reports, and editorials were used. Artifacts were gathered using LexisNexis Academic online database for the years 2009-2011. 532 results were displayed, of which 414 were found to specifically deal with American immigration.

Identifying Material

Not all discursive representations of immigration and migrants fit within the context of scapegoat theory. In order to identify relevant material, each artifact will be evaluated upon whether or not the artifact displays one, or all, of the following sentiments toward immigration and migrants: frustration and hostility (Greenwood, 1970; Zawadzki, 1948). These two categories have been

shown to be the basis for discursive scapegoating, and therefore are a way to identify which artifacts will be relevant for material analysis (Zawadzki, 1948).

Analyzing the Material

Once relevant materials were gathered they were then analyzed for one, or more, of the six scapegoating projection techniques: indirect hostility, irritability, negativism, resentment, suspicion, and verbal hostility. This approach toward analysis did not consider the internal factors that often drive prejudice and scapegoating (Zawadzki, 1948). This approach rather provided an understanding of the way that intergroup prejudice is discursively represented with respect toward the migration of minority groups.

RESULTS

The task of analyzing the major discursive representations of immigration within the current news media is a daunting task to say the least; with the topic itself being full of political rhetoric and historical taboos. Coupled with this sense of ambiguity are the endless personal, social, and economic factors that come along with analyzing racially charged theoretical frameworks such as scapegoating. Nevertheless, indirect inferences can be drawn between the most common of scapegoating projections and the way political discourse, and the subsequent news media, which surrounds the current immigration debate.

2009 A total of 229 articles were analyzed for the year of 2009. The most numerous scapegoating tactics throughout the year of 2009 were those that projected feelings of resentment, which is defined as either real or fantasized mistreatment. One example of this is a comment made by John Prigge, a city councilman for Elgin Illinois, when asked about the effects that illegal

immigration has on the city: "It's killing Elgin. I firmly believe its killing Elgin" Elgin has a modest population of 108,000 with forty percent of the population of Caucasian decent and thirty-five percent listed as Hispanic. This simple view of the city's demographics proves that while the issue of illegal-immigration may truly be a burden on a few of the city's resources, it seems more likely that the growing legal Hispanic population, are being mistaken for illegal-immigrants. Nevertheless, there is no economical proof ever put forward to support the claim of the initial comment in question, and clearly portrays a feeling of anger because of a sense of mistreatment.

Strict opponents to illegal-immigration often argue that the legal Hispanic migrants that currently reside in the U.S. are in some way universally united in opposition as well. For example, Joe Miller (Alaska), when speaking on behalf of the legal migrant population stated, "...step forward and say 'you're screwing us up, you know.'" Comments of this nature clearly reflect a sense of irritability, one of the scapegoating projection strategies. The previous statement was actually stated in support of a then future rally where Miller had named several members of the Hispanic advocacy group You Don't Speak For Me as attendees and speakers of the rally. The very next day an article was published stating that the group had made no such promises to appear at the event. This supposed lie highlights an irrational scrabble, on the part of Miller at least, to do whatever is deemed necessary to make his claims sound the most appealing, thus hinting at a sense of irritability.

The scrabbling of misinformation in order to support one's claim would not be a strategy solely dedicated to the

projection of irritability, but verbal hostility as well. In an editorial published by the *Manassa Journal Messenger* of Virginia stated that the local police are, "using the drop in violent crimes in 2008 as proof that the county's illegal immigration policy is doing its job." First of all, this claim would have to assume that illegal-immigrants are disproportionately inclined to commit a crime than those persons who are within the U.S. borders legally; no proof has ever been put forward to support this claim. The article goes on to state, "Murders went up 20 percent -- from 10 to 12 -- in 2008. Rapes stayed the same. Robberies went down 8.8 percent and aggravated assaults went down 36.5 percent." The author states that since there was not an across the board cut in Part I crimes against persons and crimes against property than the local police are not justified in suggesting that this is a significant drop in crime. Linking illegal immigrants so intimately with a discussion of these Part I crimes enthymematically suggests that illegal-immigrants are not only more criminally inclined, but are also more inclined to commit some of societies worst crimes. This is a clear indication of overcritical verbal hostility.

Raymond Herrera, a national spokesman for the Minutemen Project stated that, "The travesty is that they're trying to embed a criminal element into our society at the expense of the real American," This comment clearly displays a belief that illegal-immigrants are not only disproportionately criminals, but also that there is a deliberate effort to corrupt the perceived sterile morality of American society, thus fitting the definition of direct suspicion. For the purposes of this study, feelings of

suspicion can be defined as a belief that others are planning harm.

Indirect hostility is a feeling that was not readily found within the artifacts of 2009, this could possibly be attributed to the polar nature of the subject, nevertheless there were a few instances found. One article of note was published by a local newspaper in Pennsylvania discussed how Voice of the People USA plans to hold a, "silent protest" during the trial of two Shenandoah teens accused of beating an illegal Mexican immigrant to death last July. In response to criticism brought fourth against the protest, the rally leaders stated that they, "are no in way trying to glorify those who killed Mr. Ramirez," but rather, "to counter other potential protests that are meant to encourage illegal immigration and demonize those who oppose it." The picketing of a funeral, on both sides of the argument, is a devious strategy to support one's argument, when considering the definition used for indirect hostility in this study.

On April 24, an article titled, "Gov. Brewer: Feds Denied National Guard request" was the first of many articles that discussed how the governor was "very surprised" that the Obama administration did not send the requested 250 additional National Guard troops to help with the enforcement of border protection. In retrospect, the act of requesting the increase in National Guard troops was an obvious stretch given the political environment and seemed to be more of an act to solidify a sense of identification among those who generally oppose the Obama administration as well as comprehensive immigration reform. Brewer would later make the comment, "I just feel very disappointed that the federal government has not stepped up and done what their responsibilities are,

and have left the control, if you will, left up to our local law enforcement.” Not only this comment, but also the entire act of requesting military support from a government that has clearly expressed that it will deal with immigration enforcement at the governmental level, reflects a sense of direct opposition and a refusal to cooperate or what has been defined as negativism.

2010 A total of 276 newspaper articles were analyzed for the total year of 2010. SB 1070 reached the Arizona state legislature in January of this year, lighting a spark underneath the fermenting immigration debate that started after the disastrous events of 9/11. Most of the immigration debate during this year is focused around five key issues: SB 1070, racial profiling, assimilation, jobs, and the distinction between legal vs. illegal immigrants.

One interesting observation about this particular period is the cookie-cutter fashion by which news articles are written covering the aftermath of the Arizona bill, as well as the several states that would follow up with the introduction of similar bills. The articles would usually follow this pattern: X and Y are currently under fire after proposing a bill that is similar to Arizona’s restrictive immigration bill SB1070.” These articles would usually provide statistical data in either support or rejection of the proposed restrictive policy. For example, a more liberally leaning author stated, “According to a recent study by the Pew Hispanic Center...from 2007 to 2009, an estimated 300,000 illegal immigrants entered the United States annually, down from 550,000” while a more conservative author would cite, “The Pew Research Center estimated in 2008 that Nebraska had about 45,000 illegal immigrants, up from about 30,000 in 2000.” As one

author for the *San Bernardino County Sun* states, surveys such as these only take into account those who are willing to come forward and discuss their illegal status, and therefore cannot be relied upon for any strong statistical representation of the illegal/legal migrant population. This back and fourth of statistical correctness hints at a general feeling of either real or fantasized mistreatment on both sides of the debate.

Another proliferate theme throughout the year was the number of articles that touched on the essential undermining of U.S. national law that illegal immigration presents. This argument is usually presented from the point of view of the legal citizen by usually noting how the undermining U.S. national law undermines the rights of all the citizens within its borders. For example, one editorial published in the *Washington Post* in May stated, “... the presence of so many illegal migrants in the United States without enforceable rights undermines the rights of everyone else.” This line of argumentation is usually tied in with the issue of “sanctuary cities” or those cities who by either practice or by law protect illegal immigrants. Since the early 1980s over 40 cities and counties across the U.S. have adopted these policies, which basically state that they will not use local resources to enforce federal immigration laws. One example of this, published in the *El Paso Times*, points to an apparent hypocrisy within the Obama administration when dealing with these cities, “Everyone has noticed the hypocrisy of the government going after Arizona and ignoring the sanctuary cities” By paring the Obama administration with commentary about the undermining of national laws and rights, the discourse is able give justification for presenting a sense of

direct opposition to authority; a direct opposition to authority is defined as negativism.

Another argument that was also closely tied to the issue of undermining of national laws is the issue of assimilation. It is commonly argued, mostly from a more liberal perspective, that it would be impossible to deport all of those persons who are in this country illegally, and therefore there must be a mechanism developed to open a path to legal citizenship. Amnesty has also been commonly brought up as a solution to this issue. One editorial published in *The San Antonio Express* condenses this argument by stating, "It is physically and financially impossible to deport 12 million undocumented workers and their families. Our nation would be better served by fully assimilating these families into American society." On the other side of this argument the common statement is that granting amnesty or some other form of assimilation would simply justify the illegal act of entering this country dishonestly. In an editorial published by the Sacramento Bee it was stated that assimilation, as well as birthright citizenship, "for illegal immigrants is unjust and unfair to people who play by the rules." Statements such as these clearly show that there is a sort of perceived mistreatment is being thrust upon legal citizens every time someone enters the U.S. without going through the established routes. This is an example of the scapegoating strategy that has been defined as resentment.

2011 A total of 240 newspaper articles were analyzed for the months between January-June of 2011. A storm of immigration reforms seemed to sweep across the conservative US after the passage of SB1070, and thus during this time much of the political discourse

surrounding immigration is focused on the aftermath of the passage of the bill. Much of the debate during these months has focused on three key issues: lack of resources, lawlessness, and governmental inadequacies.

Since it is currently law to grant citizenship to any persons born within the borders of the US, it has become a common argument that these "illegally born" children will ultimately have entire families that will become a burden upon social resources and cohesion. Most of this line of argumentation takes the form of statements of verbal hostility by displaying attitudes that are negatively overcritical. For example, one article published in the *San Gabriel Valley Tribune* stated that, "In 2010 there were over 300,000 births in the United States to illegal immigrant mothers. By granting children of illegal immigrants' citizenship, the child can eventually anchor an entire family into the United States, even though they gained access to our nation illegally." More direct statements of verbal hostility like what was stated by Rep. Daryl Metcalfe when discussing how the children of illegal immigrants are the most direct threat to our nation: "They are brought up in this nation and then tear it down," By framing the argument around tax payer dollars that go into the education of these children, one is able to draw the sense of humanity out of the debate in order to focus the public's attention around the issue of taxpayer dollars. By framing the argument around the assumption that the children of illegal-immigrants will grow up to deceive and cheat society the projection strategy moves out of the realm of verbal hostility and into the realm of direct suspicion.

Another key issue that was present was the apparent lack of governmental involvement in the enforcement of illegal

immigration laws. Thus, it is said, the states must take action in order to protect themselves from the economic and social woes of illegal immigration. A statement written by Rep. Lamar Smith highlights the central argument, "We have tools to limit illegal immigration, but the Obama administration is not enforcing the immigration laws on the books." Comments of this nature are most definitely meant to be an open rebellion against the conventions of current governmental policy, and thus are a negativistic hostility projection strategy. By making an "us vs. them" contrast between the conservative base that is aggressively pushing for strict immigration reform and the Obama administration, the author is able to condense and solidify a sense of identification among those who would agree with a stricter immigration policy. The Democratic political base uses a reciprocal argument to achieve the same cohesive effects among the growing Latino voter base. Building upon this, some have even suggested a premeditated and conscious effort by the Obama administration to disrupt state and local authorities from enacting these immigration policies; this emphasis on a premeditated effort shifts the effect that is being presented away from the realm of negativism and into the realm of direct suspicion.

Like any other strongly divided political debate, there were some strict instances of verbal hostility, and perhaps some of the most critically interesting. State Rep. Daryl Metcalf would make the curious distinction between legal and non-legal immigration by stating, "It's not immigration, [it's an] illegal-alien invasion." This comment condenses what would seem to be a common conservative affect of prejudice that assumes all Latino

immigrants, no matter what their legal status, are criminals in nature and must be, if not physically, mentally separated from the rest of the American population. Another instance of particularly strong verbal hostility was a comment given by Kansas Rep. Virgil Peck during a press conference, "Looks like to me, if shooting these immigrating feral hogs works, maybe we have found a (solution) to our illegal immigration problem" Here, Rep. Peck is clearly projecting a threatening sense of hostility by directly comparing Latino immigrants to pest like feral hogs that are routinely shot from helicopters.

CONCLUSION

Issues such as immigration have, and possibly always will be, very polar in nature and thus has the tendency to attract at least a few instances intensely negative rhetoric. The six strategies defined as strategies used for scapegoating means were seen as an effective means to evaluate artifacts by focusing on the attitudes behind the projective behavior.

While using a basic search with LexisNexis Academic databases, for newspaper articles that simply contained the word 'illegal-immigration' were useful to identify that these scapegoating projective behaviors actually do exist within modern immigration discourse, it was found to omit many articles from major U.S. publications. For example, any given Lexis-Nexis Academic search will only display a maximum of one thousand results so naturally many articles will be omitted unless the search is more acutely defined. While this is not unexpected, what was surprising was what articles the search engine selected. Instead of first including those articles of the most popular U.S. news publications, the results would mostly include 'perspective' or 'opinion' editorials that are often little

more than biased rants in response to another previously published article. This could easily skew the results of the general evaluation of trends over time.

The transformation into a more positive discourse surrounding the immigration debate is not a burden that is imposed upon the general public, rather it is the discursive formations that are developed at the governmental level that will need to be changed before the dominant negative discourse will evolve into a more positive perspective (Burke, 1966). Public engagement is completely reliant on the answers that are given through political metaphors and proverb0s that surround civic problems (M. W. Smith & Waugh, 2008). Public attitudes are organizationally established through symbolic action, and because of this are usually sluggish to change unless there is a legislative body that oversees the public's mind (M. W. Smith & Waugh, 2008). Furthermore, the perpetual regeneration of negative immigration discourse, and the scapegoating strategies that are associated with it, simply serves to validate and magnify the feelings of aggression that are commonly presented throughout the American populace.

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